

Blessed People

June 06, 2018 | Pastor Dan

Maybe the greatest sermon ever is the Sermon on the Mount, preached by Jesus and recorded by Matthew in chapters five – seven of his gospel. The sermon begins with the well-known Beatitudes.

One of the most common errors people make in interpreting the Beatitudes is to believe that blessing comes as a result of our doing something, such as mourning, practicing meekness, or hungering after righteousness.

While God does bless good behavior, the Beatitudes are not teachings on how to be blessed. They are not instructions to do anything. The Beatitudes is not a list of behaviors that Christians must perform to earn the favor of God.

What Jesus came to teach was the Gospel – the good news – but the Beatitudes can't be “good news” if they are understood as a set of “how-tos” for achieving blessedness. They would then only amount to a new form of legalism.

The characteristics listed in the Beatitudes are not requirements for grace, but the rewards of grace. Here are qualities that will only be produced in the heart of a Christian by the work of the Holy Spirit.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus describes the characteristics, the lifestyle, and the behaviors of those who have been blessed by the grace of God.

Blessed people...

- Recognize that they are separated from God, who is spirit, by their physical limitations and fallen condition. (5.3)
- Mourn because of their condition. Having encountered Jesus (the Blessing), this person now realizes the magnitude of their unrighteousness without Christ, resulting in godly sorrow, followed by the comfort of God. (5.4)
- Realize that their wills are being conformed to God's will and that they are now active participants in the kingdom of God (5.5)
- Are made thirsty and hungry for more and more of God. They may not be satisfied, but they are filled. (5.6)
- Grow in mercy toward others and thus gain an increase of mercy from God (5.7)
- Have their hearts made pure, gaining a more intimate relationship with God (5.8)

- Learn to live in peace with all people as children of God (5.9)
- Are generally hated by the world at large, suffering persecution and sometimes even death (5.10-12)

Blessed people...

- Become as salt is to food – preserving and improving the flavor of their community and the culture in which they live (5.13)
- Live as light, shining the way so that those in the culture who do not know Christ can find their way to God and give Him glory (5.14-16)
- Obey the laws of God and teach others to do the same (5.17-20)
- Realize that true worship is preceded by forgiveness and reconciliation with those whom they may have wronged (5.21-24)
- Work diligently to right any wrong they may have done to others before that wrong can cause more harm, either to others or to themselves (5.25-26)
- Strive to remain morally pure by guarding their eyes against impure things and keeping their bodies under control at all times (5.27-30)
- Make a forever commitment to marriage as God intended from the beginning (5.31-32)
- Guard their tongues so that evil words never cross their lips, and they always speak the plain and simple truth (5.33-37)
- Do not retaliate against others who may have wronged them, but will instead go out of their way to appease and bring peace (5.38-41)
- Give or make loans to those who demonstrate a real need for the things of life (5.42)
- Love their enemies, pray for those who attempt to cause them pain, recognizing that in this way, they act just as God their Father acted toward them (5.43-48)

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- Are not boastful or showy about their faith or looking for praises from people, but give to the needy to earn the reward that comes from God (6.1-4)
- Do not pray to people or so that people will hear what they have to say and praise them, but will direct their prayers to God the Father, modeling their prayers after those of Jesus (6.5-13)
- Forgive other people, just as they know they have been forgiven by God, their Father (6.14-15)
- Will at times go without eating in order to spend more time in the presence of their loving Father (6.16-18)

- Are not concerned with treasures here on this earth, but with heavenly treasures that will last for all of eternity (6.19-21)
- Will protect their eyes which are the windows of their souls, not looking on those things which are dark and harmful, but on those things which are of light and life (6.22-23)
- Recognize that a love for anything that is greater than the love which they have for God will lead them into slavery to that thing and to the neglect of their relationship with God (6.24)
- Will not worry about things of this world such as food, drink, or clothing, but will trust their heavenly Father to provide for them as He does for all the birds and flowers (6.25-32)
- Will always put the kingdom of God before all other desires and purposes (6.33)
- Will not let tomorrow with all its uncertainties keep them from dealing with the issues before them today (6.34)

Blessed people...

- Do not judge others until they have first removed all barriers and obstacles to holiness from their own lives (7.1-5)
- Handle the truth of the gospel with great reverence and discernment when sharing it with others, never attempting to force the truth on those unprepared to receive it (7.6)
- Know that when they ask or seek or knock on Heaven's door, that there will be an answer – that God always answers with the best of gifts (7.7-11)
- Will always be the first to treat others with grace and kindness and generosity without waiting on others to act first (7.12)
- Know that there is no security in following the easy road and going along with the majority of the culture – that the road of righteousness is a very narrow track with few companions (7.13-14)
- Will be cautious when listening to those who profess to speak for God, comparing the quality of their words to the character of their lives (7.15-20)
- Know that simply confessing to believe in Christ is not enough to lead to righteousness unless that confession is supported by a life of good works that are in accordance with the will of God (7.21-23)
- Are wise enough to realize that hearing the truth about Jesus is not sufficient for building a life of security unless there is obedience to those truths (7.24-27)
- Are continually astonished at the truth of Christ's teaching and recognize Him as the true authority on all things pertaining to life (7.28-29)